



Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks

Region Three
Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks
1400 South 19th Ave
Bozeman, MT 59718

October 17, 2011
Decision Notice for:

Point of Rocks Fishing Access Site Proposed Fiber-Optic Easement Draft Environmental Assessment

Proposed Action

Centurylink/Qwest is requesting an easement from FWP to install a fiber-optic cable through Point of Rocks FAS Upstream Parcel. The proposed action is an easement granted by FWP. The easement would allow Centurylink/Qwest to bury a fiber-optic cable in the easement area. Centurylink/Qwest is building its fiber-optic cable to provide upgraded communications infrastructure to Yellowstone National Park and the communities of Gardiner and West Yellowstone located in southwest Montana. In addition, this infrastructure allows for future growth and upgrade potential for the entire Paradise Valley.

Montana Environmental Policy Act

Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks is required by the Montana Environmental Policy Act (MEPA) to assess potential impacts of a proposed action to the human and physical environment. In compliance with MEPA, an Environmental Assessment (EA) was completed for the proposed project by FWP and released for public comment on September 30, 2011.

Public comments on the proposed project were taken from September 30, 2011 through October 14, 2011. The EA was mailed to 40 groups and individuals.

Summary of Public Comment

FWP received ninety four (94) comments regarding the proposed action; ninety two (92) comments supported the proposal, two (2) comments opposed the proposed action.

Summary of Comments supporting the proposed project: ninety two (92) total.

“I am writing to request that Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks approve the easement request for Century Link. Allowing Century Link to complete their installation of fiber optic lines is critical to maintaining basic communications services to the area.”

“My comment for this is in the positive and hope that the Montana Fish and Wildlife will allow the fiber optic cable to be installed.”

“I am in favor of granting the easement.”

FWP Response: Duly Noted

Summary of Comments opposing the proposed project: two (2) total.

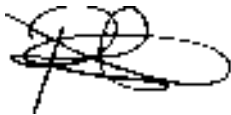
“I stand firm to (no doubt) be one of the few NOT WANTING to have Internet available to the public in the park.”

“Please say No to fiber optic cable. I was a seasonal employee at Yellowstone National Park. It was great not to have internet, TV or cell phones 24/7. It was wonderful to enjoy the serenity of the park. It also allowed more conversations between people.”

FWP Response: After analyzing the potential impacts of this project on the Point of Rocks FAS as well as the broader implications of the projects purpose of providing updated communication services to the greater Yellowstone area, we find that the minimal impacts that may be incurred with the placement of the fiber-optic cable across the FAS would be negligible and overshadowed by the necessity of remote communities who require a reliable conveyance of information for public safety, commerce and individual household communications. We also accept and understand the greater needs of the community for infrastructure improvement and upgrade potential.

Decision

Based on the Environmental Assessment, public comment, and FWP evaluation, it is my decision to proceed with the proposed action, Alternative A, as described in the Point of Rocks Fishing Access Site Proposed Fiber-optic Cable Easement Draft Environmental Assessment. This alternative allows the placement of a fiber-optic cable across the Point of Rocks FAS.



Patrick J. Flowers
Regional Fish & Wildlife Supervisor
